

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 AID-05 L-03 PA-01 SP-02

DODE-00 /052 W

-----003189 291226Z /43

O 291138Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 127

89MAG ANDREWS AFB MD/DON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 12935

89MAG FOR ACFT CMDR MAJOR WILLIAM S. HARTSELL, SAM 24127--FOR
SEC MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EAID, PINT, PORS, KE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE MWAI KIBAKI

1. I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM A SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE NEW AID AGRICULTURAL SECTOR LOAN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOK. MWAI KIBAKI, MINISTER OF FINANCE, SIGNED FOR THE GOK. THE SIGNING CEREMONY WAS HELD WITHOUT MEDIA PUBLICITY AT THE MINISTER'S REQUEST IN KEEPING WITH THE GOK'S DECISION TO LOW KEY OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE BURIAL OF PRESIDENT KENYATTA. THE MINISTER, HOWEVER, ASKED ME TO JOIN HIM IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS TO GIVE PROPER PUBLICITY TO THIS IMPORTANT LOAN AGREEMENT WHICH IS CENTRAL TO THE DIRECTION OF THE NEXT DEVELOPMENT PLAN.
2. FOLLOWING THE SIGNING CEREMONY KIBAKI ASKED ME TO JOIN HIM IN HIS OFFICE FOR A BRIEF CHAT. IN THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION HE ASSURED ME THAT EVERYTHING WAS HAPPENING THUS FAR ACCORDING TO PLAN SINCE THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT. HE INTIMATED THAT PRESIDENT KENYATTA HAD HIMSELF COUNSELED
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THAT THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE PURSUED ON A NORMAL BASIS AFTER HIS PASSING AND DEFINITELY NO PREEMPTIVE SHOW OF FORCE SHOULD BE PERMITTED. WHILE NO DISTURBANCES ARE ANTICIPATED, IF SUCH DOES OCCUR AT SOME POINT DURING THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FOLLOWING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING, THE USE OF FORCE MIGHT BE NECESSARY BUT SUCH A DECISION COULD ONLY BE TAKEN BY THE CABINET.

3. KIBAKI SAID THAT THE KANU PARTY CONGRESS WILL BE HELD AROUND THE FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER. THE MOURNING PERIOD IS OFFICIALLY OVER ON SEPTEMBER 22 AND THE CONGRESS WILL BE HELD AROUND THE FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER. THE MOURNING PERIOD IS OFFICIALLY OVER ON SEPTEMBER 22 AND THE CONGRESS COULD TAKE PLACE SHORTLY THEREAFTER, BUT IT IS BEING PUT OFF TO OCTOBER SO THAT THE NAIROBI SHOW CAN TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER AS SCHEDULED. MWAI CONFIDED HIS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT MOI AND SAID HE WAS SURE MOI WOULD BE NOMINATED OVERWHELMINGLY BY KANU AND PROCLAIMED PRESIDENT. HE SAID QUOTE WE UNQUOTE HAVE 39 OF THE 43 CHAPTERS OF KANU ALREADY COMMITTED TO MOI. HE SAID AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE CABINET MINISTERS SUPPORT MOI AND THE PARLIAMENT IS NEARLY UNANIMOUSLY BEHIND MOI'S NOMINATION. DEBATE WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CONGRESS, HE SAID, AND THERE ARE A COUPLE OF PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO LINE UP SUPPORT FOR A CHALLENGE, BUT THE SUPPORT IS JUST NOT PRESENT. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION ON WHAT WILL ODINGA DO, HE SAID THAT HE IS QUOTE ALREADY ABOUT IN TOWN TRYING TO FEEL OUT A COUPLE OF CABINET MINISTERS UNQUOTE WHO MIGHT CHALLENGE MOI BUT HE (KIBAKI) DOESN'T FEEL THAT ODINGA'S EFFORTS WILL SUCCEED. HE SAID THAT EVERY POLITICIAN, INCLUDING THOSE KIKUYUS WHO WOULD WANT TO CHALLENGE MOI, IS FULLY AWARE THAT OPEN AND ACTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF ODINGA WOULD RESULT IN CERTAIN DEFEAT. CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME POLITICIANS DO HAVE SECRET CONTACTS WITH ODINGA, HE SAID, BUT ODINGA IS NO LONGER AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL FORCE IN KENYA.

4. COMMENT: DURING OUR CONVERSATION I TOOK EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO INDICATE TO KIBAKI THE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE THE USG HAS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF KENYA TO CARRY THROUGH ON THE SUCCESSION IN A FAIR AND LEGITIMATE FASHION AS LAID OUT IN THE CONSTITUTION. I STRESSED WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE PRINCIPAL THREAT TO AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION, NAMELY THE FAILURE OF THE LEADERSHIP TO ADHERE TO THE BASIC DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND OPEN SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH KENYATTA'S LEADERSHIP HAS PERMITTED TO EVOLVE AND WHICH THE CITIZENRY OF KENYA HAS NOW COME TO EXPECTM WE BOTH AGREED THAT ANY IMPROPER MOVE BY THE LEADERSHIP COULD BE SEIZED UPON BY ANY DISGRUNTLED FACTION TO DISCREDIT THE LEGITIMATE PROCEDURES GOVERNING SUCCESSION AND LEAD TO SERIOUS TROUBLE. I FEEL FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF KENYAN POLITICIANS IS COMMITTED TO A FAIR AND LEGITIMATE COMPETITION FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THIS COUNTRY. LE MELLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FINANCE, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NAIROB12935
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780352-0636
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780813/aaaaaksp.tel
Line Count: 116
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 65def759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1591250
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE MWAH KIBAKI
TAGS: PGOV, EAID, PINT, PORS, KE
To: STATE ANDREWS AFB
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/65def759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014